



Resources for Researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participation in War

NAIDOC Week 2014

The theme for NAIDOC Week 2014 was 'Serving Country: Centenary and Beyond' which honoured all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who have fought in defence of our country. This theme allowed a focus on the untold histories and stories of Indigenous involvement in War, particularly in light of the centenary of WW1 approaching.

It is estimated that over 1,200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women volunteered for the AIF during WW1. It should be remembered that this was a time when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were not recognised as Australian citizens and suffered under the strict policies and practices of the Protection Era. The Defence Act initially excluded Aboriginal people from enlisting – resulting in many Aboriginals enlisted under assumed ethnicity/cultural backgrounds. For example, Richard Martin from Dunwich (Stradbroke Island) enlisted on 17 December 1914 as a 'Maori' claiming to have been born in Dunedin. After enlistment, Martin joined the 15th Battalion at Gallipoli before being reassigned to the 47th Battalion where he lost his life at Pozieres. Following heavy casualties on the Western Front, the Defence Act was revised to accept enlistments from Aboriginals who had one parent (later Grandparent) of European descent.

Despite this socio-political context, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people volunteered, enlisted and served in WW1. The majority of these men enlisted in 1917.

This resource guide will assist families and researchers alike to identify materials that may uncover the hidden histories and the untold stories of these ~1,200 men and women. As well as State Library materials, the guide will also highlight other sources for research.

State Library of Queensland

The State Library of Queensland (SLQ) is located in Brisbane and is the primary custodian of Queensland documentary heritage. The SLQ collections include historical and original items as well as published materials and audio-visual articles pertaining to Queensland history. Within their collections are a broad range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander topics including language, culture, history and genealogy. The collections are physically housed in Brisbane at the State Library of Queensland, Southbank; however there are on-line materials, including exhibitions and other documents available for personal and academic research by schools.

The collections hold significant materials relating to WW1; buried in among these items are stories and references to the Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander people who were there on the home front and the war front.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participation in War Resources at SLQ

The following is a list of weblinks/webpages and other resources that may be useful to communities, schools and researchers for exploring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in War.

- **OneSearch** - online catalogue:
http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=SLQ&fromLogin=true [Online access to the State Library's catalogue – Queensland residents can become library members and access online materials, databases, etc.]
 - There is also the link to the 'tags' area – many items within the collection have been 'tagged' to identify links to Indigenous participation in war:
http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/primo_library/libweb/action/tagsAction.do?menuitem=3&fn=showTagsPage&fromTop=true&fromPreferences=false&fromEshelf=false&vid=SLQ
 - For example, there is a general 'tag' for '[Indigenous participation in war](#)' that identifies collection items relating to Indigenous participation in war, including Boer War, WW1, WW2, Korea, Vietnam, etc. Other 'tags' identify particular units or regiments in WW1 – the [11th Light Horse Regiment](#) is well-known for the many Aboriginal stockmen who enlisted in this regiment.
- **SLQ Membership:** www.slq.qld.gov.au/services/membership [Free membership to Qld residents - membership card allows for access to online materials; members can also add their own 'tags' to identify materials of interest.]
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Resources at SLQ:** www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi [SLQ Portal for resources, collections, etc. relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, histories, cultures and languages.]
- **Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs):** www.slq.qld.gov.au/about-us/indigenous-knowledge-centres [22 IKCs are located in Aboriginal communities and Torres Strait - they serve as a cultural hub and often are the only Wi-Fi connection in the community. IKCs develop their local collections and local histories – many are currently compiling profiles of community members who served in WW1.]
- **kuril dhagun:** www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/kuril-dhagun [IKC based at Southbank - coordinates exhibitions, school visits etc. – kuril dhagun aims to showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in war over the centennial period.]
- **John Oxley Library Blogs:** blogs.slq.qld.gov.au/ [JOL has several blogs, including Indigenous Voices, Queensland's WW1 Centenary, JOL, etc. - lots of great info/stories, including many that profile [Indigenous soldiers](#).]
- **Indigenous Digital Stories:** www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/contemporary-stories [Collection of online digital stories relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, histories, lifestyles, etc. As part of QANZAC100, profiles and stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement in WW1 will be included.]

SLQ Weblinks (continued)

- **Q ANZAC 100: Memories for a New Generation:** www.slq.qld.gov.au/whats-on/programs/q-anzac-100-memories-for-a-new-generation [Q ANZAC 100: *Memories for a New Generation*, will commemorate and celebrate our history, capture living memories, and help current and future generations understand Queensland's experiences during and after the First World War – renewing the First World War and Anzac legacy.]
- **Queensland Stories:** www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/queensland-stories [Digital stories from across Queensland, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories.]
- **Picture Queensland** - www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/picture-queensland [Picture Queensland is an online collection of images that documents Queensland's people, places and events. This includes historical and contemporary images from across the state – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in war is a key theme.]
- **State Library of Queensland's Vimeo Channel** - <http://vimeo.com/channels/slqcollections> [Lots of digital stories from across Queensland on different themes, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, places, collections, etc.]
- **State Library of Queensland Flickr Q ANZAC 100: Memories for a New Generation:** www.flickr.com/groups/qanzac100/ [Historical photos from SLQ collections relating to WW1, including Aboriginal soldiers.]

State Library of Queensland Collection Items

There has been some research activity on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in war by historians and researchers, including David Huggonson, Philippa Scarlett, Rod Pratt, Robert Hall, Garth O'Connell and others as well as initiatives under the auspices of the Australian War Memorial (AWM) or the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). The State Library holds many of these published texts and they are excellent references for researchers and families alike.

- **Q 940.40994 SCA** Scarlett, P. (2011) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander volunteers for the AIF: the Indigenous response to World War One.
- **P 940.403 pra** Pratt, R. (1993) Biographical register of Queensland Aborigines who served in the Great War, 1914-1918.
- **940.341 2012** Winegard, T. C. (2012) Indigenous peoples of the British dominions and the First World War.
- **J 940.41294 ANZ** Green, A. (2012) ANZAC Light Horse & NZ Mounted Rifles in pictures, 1914-1919. Volume 1: a photographic volume compiled from original unit histories of selected Australian Light Horse regiments and New Zealand Mounted Rifles.
- **P 357.1 BAT** Bates, I. B. (2003) Queensland mounted units, 1860-1940.
- **Q 940.403 JAC** Jackimos, A. (1993) Forgotten heroes : aborigines at war from the Somme to Vietnam
- **J 940.41294 HAM** Hammond, E. W. (1942) History of the 11th Light Horse Regiment, Fourth Light Horse Brigade, Australian Imperial Forces: War 1914-1919.
- **P 940.5404 yug** Kombumerri Aboriginal Corporation for Culture (1991) Yugambeh: in defence of our country.
- **CPC Aborigines at War** Photographs of Aborigines at War from State Library Copy Print Collection.

SLQ Online Resources

These are accessible through OneSearch using State Library Membership login.

- De Groot (1979) "Aborigines in the Australian armed forces in the Great War and the Second World War." Thesis (B.A. Hons. 1979) from the Department of History, University of Adelaide.
- Goodall, H. (1987) "Not such a respected soldier ...: the impact of World War I on Aborigines in New South Wales." In History Teacher, v.21, no.4, Aug 2002: 4-8.
- Moremon, J. (2002) "Indigenous Australians at war." In History Teacher, v.40, no.2, Dec 2002: 3-6.
- Noble, R. (2008) "Identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Veterans Project." In Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal, Mar/Apr 2008, v32 (2).

Peak Collecting Institutions

Researchers and community members are also encouraged to access collections and materials from other institutions that have an interest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their histories and lifestyles.

Australian National University

The Australian National University is currently undertaking a research project to document Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in Australia's Defence Forces from the Boer War to 2000. Further details on the *Our Mob Served* project can be found on their website: <http://ourmobobserved.anu.edu.au/>

Australian War Memorial [www.awm.gov.au]

The Australian War Memorial has an extensive collection, including online resources to support research into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement in WW1. If you know the person's name, a good starting point is the AWM "search for a person" webpage: www.awm.gov.au/people/roll-search/all/ which allows you to search indexes and nominal rolls for all wars that involved Australian defence forces.

Other useful webpages on their site include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Defence Forces: www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/aborigines/
- ANZAC Diversity: www.awm.gov.au/education/schools/resources/anzac-diversity/
- Family History Webpage: www.awm.gov.au/research/family-history/
- *For Country, For Nation* exhibition: <https://www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/country-nation-0/>
- Indigenous Australians at War Honour Roll: www.aiatsis.gov.au/collections/exhibitions/iaaw/honour.html
- Indigenous Australian Servicemen: www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/aborigines/indigenous/
- Too Dark for the Light Horse Education Kit: www.awm.gov.au/education/schools/memorial-boxes/03-too-dark-for-the-light-horse/

National Archives of Australia [www.naa.gov.au]

The National Archives of Australia has an extensive online collection of digitised materials, including service records; the Record Search facility allows researchers, community members, etc. to narrow their search to specific Wars. If a person's name is known, the surname details can be used as the search term – generally the full Service Record [Attestation Form; Medical Info; Service Duty, etc.] is accessible via a digitised copy. Service Records for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may also include a reference to their Aboriginality in their Medical Information.

- National Archives of Australia – Service Records: www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/

The National Archive of Australia has a current exhibition exploring Indigenous Soldiers and their fight for social justice. Further details on the *Facing Two Fronts* exhibition: www.naa.gov.au/visit-us/exhibitions/facing-two-fronts/index.aspx

Online External Sources

There are several online collections or websites that are rich in materials for researchers; including the following:

Australian Light Horse Studies Centre [<http://alh-research.tripod.com/>]

This website is a Forum-based platform and covers a range of topics relating to the Australian Light Horse, including a section on [Aboriginal Members of the Light Horse, AIF](#).

Mapping Our ANZACs [<http://mappingouranzacs.naa.gov.au/>]

This website has an [interactive map](#) format to find a service person either by place of birth or place of enlistment; it then links to Service Records located in the national Archives of Australia. Other webpages allow for input from registered members, including scrapbooks as well as the capacity to add notes on service persons.

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) [www.aiatsis.gov.au]

AIATSIS has an online exhibition '[Indigenous Australians at War](#)' which has a comprehensive overview of the background context for Indigenous participation in the war as well as excellent resources and [further reading](#). A newly created section complements their research activity into Indigenous service persons: [Our Mob Served](#). AIATSIS also has a Family History Unit which has developed a guide to researching Indigenous people in [Military Records](#).

Indigenous Histories [<http://indigenoushistories.com/>]

Indigenous historian Philippa Scarlett has developed a [website/blog](#) which expands on her research work into Indigenous participation in WW1.

Trove/NLA Newspapers [www.trove.nla.gov.au]

The [National Library of Australia](#) has facilitated the digitisation of historical newspapers and other items; these materials can be searched using search terms such as 'Aboriginal soldier' 'Aboriginal Digger' etc. The [Queenslander Newspaper](#) which has been digitised features photographs of Queensland men who enlisted in WW1 as well as Regimental Photos before and after the war.

Department of Veteran Affairs [www.dva.gov.au]

The Australian Government [Department of Veteran Affairs](#) has webpages devoted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Veterans which provides weblinks and other resources.

Q ANZAC 100 Community Projects

- **Black Diggers of Logan** [Logan Regional Library Services]: Logan Library commemorates the Aboriginal, Torres Strait and Australian South Sea Islanders who fought alongside their comrades despite not being officially counted as people of their own nation during the First World War. Website: <http://www.logan.qld.gov.au/facilities-and-recreation/libraries/library-services/indigenous-services/black-diggers-of-logan> HistoryPin Project: <https://www.historypin.org/en/first-world-war-centenary/memories-for-a-new-generation/black-diggers-of-logan/geo/-27.643075,153.104251,4/bounds/-55.177881,126.385501,8.843359,179.823001>
- **Boys from Barambah: The Story of the black diggers of Barambah-Cherbourg of World War 1** [The Ration Shed Museum]: Commemorates the men from Barambah Mission and their involvement in WW1. Website: <http://rationshed.com.au/product/the-boys-from-barambah-book/>
- **Stradbroke 100: North Stradbroke Island's First World War Soldiers and the Homefront** [North Stradbroke Island Historical Museum] Exhibition and accompanying booklet that explored the war experiences and post-war lives of 22 soldiers, including 14 men who were Aboriginal. Website: <http://stradbroke-museum.com.au/WW1>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Genealogy at the State Library of Queensland

SLQ also has a range of materials in their collections that relate to community and family histories; these are excellent starting points for researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who served in WW1. These materials can support communities in documenting their local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander history. To support community members, SLQ has developed a number of Information Guides on researching family history as well as identifying potential sources within the collections.

Further details: www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/info-guides/atsi

Of particular interest to school-communities are the following items:

- *Tindale Collection* - During 1938 and 1939 Norman Tindale recorded genealogies as part of the Harvard - Adelaide Universities Anthropological Expedition. Tindale created genealogies which could include up to three generations, sometimes recording language names and relevant tribal family. The State Library of Queensland holds copies of these genealogies and portrait photographs from Aboriginal communities at Yarrabah, Cherbourg, Mona Mona, Palm Island and Woorabinda. Tindale also visited two Aboriginal communities in northern New South Wales at Boggabilla and Woodenbong. Further details: www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/info-guides/atsi/tindale
- *Margaret Lawrie Collection* - Between 1964 and 1973, Margaret Lawrie recorded many Torres Strait Islander genealogies (family trees) and other cultural information including vocabularies, music and photographs. The material relates to seventeen Torres Strait Islander communities. Further details: www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/info-guides/atsi/margaret-lawrie
- **FAMHIS 929.1 1989** Montague, R. H. (1989) How to trace your military ancestors in Australia and New Zealand.

Visiting The State Library of Queensland (SLQ)

In addition to formal events such as seminars and conferences, SLQ hosts school and community research groups who wish to visit SLQ in Brisbane and explore their collections. School or community groups are encouraged to contact the State Library to organise visits.

Further details: www.slq.qld.gov.au/visit-us

State Library of Queensland

Stanley Place, South Brisbane Qld. 4101.

PO Box 3488, South Brisbane Qld. 4101.

Telephone: (07) 3840 7666

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participation in War:

www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/world-war-1/indigenous-participation-in-war



This research guide is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia licence. You are free to copy, communicate and adapt this work, so long as you attribute State Library of Queensland. For more information see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/>